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A Corpus-Based Comparison of Hedging in Research Articles: Filipino and Thai Contexts

William D. Magday Jr.,^{*} , Marcielyne R. Pelaez  and Rosalie R. Valdez 
 Nueva Vizcaya State University, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines
 Ton Duc Thang University, Vietnam

Abstract. Hedging remains a critical rhetorical strategy for balancing conviction and caution in academic discourse. This study investigates the deployment of hedges in the Results and Discussion (R-D) sections of English Language Teaching (ELT) research articles (RAs) written by Filipino and Thai writers. Drawing on a corpus-based analysis of 70 articles—35 from each national group—the study finds notable differences in both the frequency and the preferred forms of hedging, with Filipino writers demonstrating a consistently higher density of hedge use. These patterns are shaped in part by each country's distinct relationship with English: a second language (ESL) context in the Philippines and a foreign language (EFL) context in Thailand, even where disciplinary writing conventions are broadly shared. These findings yield implications for EAP (English for Academic Purposes) pedagogy in Southeast Asia, advocating for targeted instruction in strategic caution and rhetorical positioning.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Hedging in Academic Discourse

Hedges are essential linguistic devices that allow writers to present their viewpoints with appropriate levels of certainty and caution. In the field of ELT, academic writing is increasingly viewed as a dynamic interaction where authors negotiate their claims with a critical audience (Mallaki et al., 2023). Recent studies suggest that the primary role of hedging in ELT research is to demonstrate authorial humility, allowing writers to present findings as interpretations rather than absolute truths in order to invite further scholarly dialogue (Merlinda et al., 2025).

*Corresponding author: William D. Magday, Jr; wmagdayjr@nvsu.edu.ph

The Results and Discussion (R-D) section is particularly critical in this regard. Recent investigations have identified that hedging in this section serves as a strategic tool for scholarly positioning, where writers must balance the novelty of their findings with the reliability of their empirical evidence (Adrian & Fajiri, 2023). Furthermore, Ghufuran et al. (2025) argue that the strategic use of hedges is a key indicator of academic maturity, protecting researchers from potential refutation while fostering a spirit of collaborative inquiry. Aull and Lancaster (2014) highlight that these markers of stance are essential in both early and advanced writing, helping authors navigate the complexities of knowledge claims in a nuanced manner.

1.2 Cultural and Pedagogical Perspectives on Hedging

The acquisition and deployment of hedging strategies are deeply intertwined with the cultural backgrounds and pedagogical environments in which academic writers are situated. Various studies have suggested that the way scholars mitigate their claims is not merely a linguistic choice but a reflection of their cultural norms and the specific emphasis of their English language training.

Sermsook et al. (2017) provide insights into the challenges faced by Thai EFL students, indicating that their struggles with grammatical aspects may impede their effective use of hedges. This suggests that a deeper understanding of English grammar could enhance their hedging strategies, allowing them to articulate their interpretations more cautiously and invite academic dialogue. Conversely, research by Chen and Zhang (2017) underscores the cultural and linguistic influences on hedging strategies among different writer groups.

The effectiveness of various instructional approaches in teaching hedges is another critical area of interest. Jaroongkhongdach et al. (2012) emphasise the need for targeted instruction in hedging to improve students' academic writing skills. Uccelli et al. (2013) further contribute to this by advocating for the mastery of academic language, suggesting that both Filipino and Thai ELT writers would benefit from explicit instruction in hedging strategies. Furthermore, Wannaruk and Amnuai (2016) provide a comparative analysis of rhetorical move structures, revealing distinct differences in how hedges are employed, which may reflect broader cultural variations in academic writing practices.

The academic significance of this study lies in its contribution to intercultural rhetoric. By identifying how local linguistic backgrounds influence rhetorical choices in the Global South, this research offers a model for EAP practitioners to better tailor instructional materials for diverse learners (Flowerdew, 2015; Tran et al., 2021). Having established the rationale for this comparison, the next section reviews the relevant literature and theoretical frameworks.

2. Literature Review

The investigation of hedging strategies has shifted from subjective manual analysis to data-driven empirical research through the integration of corpus linguistics. A corpus-based approach offers a rigorous and systematic way to analyse large-scale authentic texts, providing insights that go beyond mere

intuition (McEnery & Hardie, 2011). In recent years, this methodology has been lauded for its ability to provide “representative objectivity,” allowing researchers to identify the specific linguistic fingerprints of different academic communities (Huang & Zhang, 2024). According to Magday et al. (2022), utilizing corpora in genre and discourse analysis enables researchers to uncover hidden rhetorical patterns that define specific academic communities. Recent comparative research by Almulla (2025) demonstrates that a corpus-based lens is essential in distinguishing the subtle engagement markers used by human writers versus the more repetitive patterns found in AI-generated texts.

Expanding on this, the use of learner corpora has become a pivotal sub-field. As noted by Crosthwaite and Jiang (2023), corpus-driven feedback allows educators to pinpoint exactly where L2 writers (such as Thai and Filipino scholars) over-rely on specific modal verbs such as “can” or “will”, failing to utilize more sophisticated lexical hedges such as tentatively or suggestive. Furthermore, Li and Wharton (2021) argue that corpus tools facilitate multidimensional analysis, which helps researchers see how hedging correlates with other features such as stance and engagement across different sections of a research article.

By examining the R-D sections through this perspective, researchers can quantify how writers from various sociocultural backgrounds navigate the delicate balance of academic persuasion using verifiable, high-precision data. This method moves beyond identifying whether a writer hedges, to understanding how frequently and in what specific collocations those hedges appear relative to native-speaker norms (Pérez-Paredes, 2020). While previous research has explored hedging across various cultures, there is a need to compare writers from the Philippines (ESL context) and Thailand (EFL context). Despite the valuable insights provided by existing literature, a significant knowledge gap remains: there is limited comparative research specifically focusing on the pragmatic deployment of hedges by Filipino and Thai ELT writers in their R-D sections.

To address this gap, this study utilizes a corpus-based approach to investigate language use in large-scale authentic texts. As argued by Magday et al. (2022), corpus-based analysis allows researchers to uncover patterns and frequencies not easily observable through traditional manual analysis. By employing this method, the study systematically examines the frequency, linguistic types, and rhetorical functions of hedges across two specialized corpora to inform pedagogical practices in the Southeast Asian region.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the frequency of hedges used in the R-D sections of ELT research articles written by Filipino and Thai writers?
2. What are the linguistic categories of hedges predominantly employed by the two groups?
3. What are the rhetorical functions performed by these hedges within the corpora?

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a descriptive-comparative research design, utilizing a corpus-based linguistic analysis to examine the use of hedging devices in academic writing thoroughly. This approach enables a comprehensive and systematic investigation that integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods, thereby capturing not only the frequency but also the contextual functions of hedging within scholarly texts.

Specifically, the study focuses on a sizable corpus composed of specialized academic texts authored by Filipino and Thai scholars writing in English. By comparing these two distinct cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the research aims to identify and analyse cross-cultural variations in the employment of hedging strategies. This comparative framework is essential to understanding how cultural norms, academic conventions, and linguistic preferences shape the rhetorical choices made by scholars in different contexts. The corpus-based method offers significant advantages as it allows for the analysis of authentic language use on a large scale, providing empirical evidence that supports the identification of patterns and trends in hedging. This methodology also facilitates replicability and objectivity, as the data-driven approach minimizes researcher bias often associated with purely qualitative analyses.

Moreover, the descriptive aspect of the design provides a detailed account of the types and frequencies of hedging devices, while the comparative element highlights similarities and differences between the Filipino and Thai academic discourses. This dual focus not only contributes to the field of contrastive rhetoric but also offers practical insights for academic writers, educators, and linguists interested in intercultural communication and EAP. In sum, the chosen research design is well-suited to uncovering the nuanced ways in which hedging functions across cultures, thereby enriching our understanding of academic writing conventions in diverse English-medium scholarly communities.

3.2 Corpus Compilation and Selection Criteria

A total of 70 research articles (RAs) were systematically compiled into two distinct corpora, encompassing a total of 70 RAs within the field of ELT. The first corpus, referred to as Corpus A or the Filipino Corpus, consists of 35 RAs authored by Filipino scholars affiliated with higher education institutions (HEIs) based in the Philippines. The second corpus, Corpus B or the Thai Corpus, similarly comprises 35 RAs authored by Thai scholars from universities located in Thailand. The compilation of these corpora was governed by a set of rigorous selection criteria to ensure both relevance and comparability across the two datasets.

In compiling Corpus A, particular attention was paid to the authorship of the articles, with the primary author required to be a Filipino national actively affiliated with a Philippine-based university or college at the time of publication. To maintain the academic rigor and quality of the corpus, only articles published in peer-reviewed journals indexed in reputable databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, or the ASEAN Citation Index (ACI) were considered. Furthermore, each

article was required to address topics explicitly pertinent to the field of ELT, including but not limited to second language acquisition, language pedagogy, teacher education, and applied linguistics. The corpus incorporates a diverse range of research methodologies, encompassing quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods designs, thereby providing a comprehensive representation of the research approaches employed within the Philippine ELT scholarly community. To capture contemporary trends and issues, the selection was limited to articles published within the past ten years, specifically from 2014 to 2024.

Similarly, Corpus B was curated with parallel criteria to facilitate a valid comparative analysis. The primary authors of the selected articles are Thai nationals affiliated with universities in Thailand at the time of publication. The articles included in this corpus were also sourced from peer-reviewed journals indexed in prominent academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and the ASEAN Citation Index, ensuring the inclusion of high-quality and impactful research. As with Corpus A, the thematic focus of each article was restricted to ELT-related topics, embracing areas such as language acquisition, pedagogy, and applied linguistics, among others. The corpus reflects a balanced mix of research designs, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies, to represent the breadth of research practices accurately in the Thai ELT context. The temporal scope was likewise confined to the most recent decade to ensure the relevance of the data.

To ensure the validity and comparability of the data, the articles were selected based on the following criteria: (a) published in reputable, peer-reviewed international or national journals between 2015 and 2024; (b) focused specifically on ELT or Applied Linguistics pedagogy; and (c) followed the standard IMRaD (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion) structure. The analysis was strictly delimited to the R-D sections, totalling approximately 141,350 words across both corpora.

3.3 Manual Disambiguation Process

To ensure the reliability of the corpus analysis, a manual disambiguation process was conducted. This was necessary because many potential hedging terms are polysemous. For example, the modal verb “may” can indicate epistemic possibility (hedging) or permission (non-hedging). Only instances where the term functioned as an expression of scientific uncertainty or caution were included in the final count, as verified by two independent raters with a high inter-rater reliability score (Cohen’s $\kappa = 0.92$).

3.4 Analytical Framework

The identification and classification of hedging devices followed the multi-dimensional framework established by Hyland (1998) and Salager-Meyer (1994). This framework categorizes hedges into the following two primary dimensions:

1. Linguistic Categories: Hedges were classified into five types:

- 1.1. Modal auxiliaries (e.g., may, might, could);
- 1.2. Epistemic lexical verbs (e.g., suggest, appear, seem, indicate);
- 1.3. Epistemic adverbs (e.g., perhaps, possibly, often);

- 1.4. Epistemic adjectives (e.g., probable, likely, possible); and
- 1.5. Nouns and other syntactic structures (e.g., possibility, if-clauses).

2. Rhetorical Functions: Hedges were further analysed based on their pragmatic intent, categorized as Reliability hedges (confidence-oriented), Writer-oriented hedges (protective/self-shielding), Attribute hedges (precision-oriented), and Reader-oriented hedges (interaction-oriented).

3.5 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

The data collection process for this study involved a two-stage screening procedure, combining both manual and computer-assisted techniques to ensure accuracy and comprehensiveness. Initially, a broad-based identification of potential hedging devices was conducted using concordancing software. This involved searching for a pre-established list of hedging keywords and phrases derived from the existing literature on hedging in academic discourse. Following this automated search, a meticulous manual reading of each R-D section within the selected research articles was performed. This step was crucial to ascertain whether the identified linguistic items functioned as hedges within their specific contextual environment. For example, this process allowed for the differentiation between the epistemic “may” denoting possibility and instances of “may” used to indicate permission, thereby ensuring that only genuine instances of hedging were included in the dataset.

To facilitate a meaningful comparison between the two corpora, which were of unequal lengths, the frequency of hedging devices was normalized. Specifically, the occurrence of hedges was calculated per 1,000 words of text. This normalization procedure mitigated the potential bias introduced by the differing sizes of the Filipino and Thai corpora, allowing for a more accurate and reliable comparison of hedging frequencies. The subsequent analysis employed descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentages, to interpret the distribution and functional patterns of the identified hedging devices across the two groups of writers. These statistical measures provided a quantitative basis for understanding the prevalence and usage of hedging strategies among Filipino and Thai scholars in the context of ELT research articles.

3.6 Research Instrument and Data Validation (Inter-rater Reliability)

To ensure the reliability and objectivity of the linguistic analysis, the identification and classification of hedges underwent a validation process through inter-rater agreement. Two experts in the field of Applied Linguistics and ELT, both holding doctoral degrees and with extensive experience in discourse analysis, served as independent raters. A random sample of 20% of the total R-D sections from both corpora was provided to the raters for independent coding based on the established framework of Hyland (1998).

To measure the level of agreement between the researchers and the experts, Cohen’s kappa (κ) was utilized. The statistical analysis yielded a Cohen’s kappa coefficient of 0.92, which indicates an “almost perfect agreement” (Landis & Koch, 1977, as cited in Magday & Pramoolsook, 2020; Magday et al., 2022). Any minor discrepancies in the classification of specific linguistic items were resolved

through a series of collaborative discussions and consensus-building sessions until a final agreement was reached. This rigorous validation process ensures that the data presented in this study are consistent, transparent, and linguistically sound.

4. Results and Discussions

The following tables present the frequency and distribution of hedges found in the R-D sections of the two corpora.

Table 1: Frequency of hedges in the R-D section of ELT RAs

Group	Total Word Count	Total Hedges (F)	Hedges per 1,000 Words
Filipino Writers	72,450	1,720	23.74
Thai Writers	68,900	1,215	17.63

As shown in Table 1, the results indicate that Filipino writers utilize hedges at a higher frequency (23.74 per 1,000 words) compared to Thai writers (17.63 per 1,000 words). This significant difference aligns with the notion that writers from ESL backgrounds, such as the Philippines, may have a more nuanced grasp of the “soft” language required to navigate the interpersonal and rhetorical demands of ELT research (Tran & Tang, 2022).

This finding is corroborated by the work of Jaroongkhongdach et al. (2012), who noted that Thai researchers often face challenges in meeting the rhetorical standards of international publications, which frequently results in a more direct or less hedged tone compared to articles that successfully penetrate high-impact international journals. The lower frequency of hedges among Thai writers may stem from what Sermsook et al. (2017) describe as limited exposure to the pragmatic nuances of English academic discourse in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context. In many EFL settings, the focus of instruction is often on grammatical accuracy rather than the strategic use of stance markers to mitigate claims.

Furthermore, the higher density of hedges in the Filipino corpus can be linked to the findings of Aull and Lancaster (2014), who suggest that more advanced or expert academic writers – often those with higher immersion in English – tend to use more complex stance markers to balance their arguments. Because Filipino writers generally operate in a medium-of-instruction environment where English is used across disciplines, they develop a greater sensitivity to the “linguistic markers of stance” necessary to engage in scholarly dialogue (Uccelli et al., 2013).

In contrast, the tendency of Thai writers to use fewer hedges may result in “over-categorical” statements, which Wannaruk and Amnuai (2016) observed when comparing Thai national journals with international ones. They found that articles published in local Thai contexts often lack the sophisticated rhetorical move structures—including the subtle negotiation of findings—found in broader international ELT discourse. This suggests that while Thai writers are proficient in presenting data, there remains a pedagogical gap in the use of “intercultural hedging” strategies required to align with global academic expectations (Chen &

Zhang, 2017). This could mean that these findings underscore the necessity of integrating pragmatic competence into ELT curricula to empower non-native scholars in navigating the delicate balance between factual reporting and academic persuasion.

Table 2: Distribution of hedge categories in the R-D section

Category	Filipino		Thai	
	(F)	(%)	(F)	(%)
Modal auxiliaries (e.g., may, could)	620	36.05%	510	41.98%
Epistemic lexical verbs (e.g., suggest)	415	24.13%	280	23.05%
Epistemic adverbs (e.g., perhaps)	210	12.21%	125	10.29%
Epistemic adjectives (e.g., possible)	195	11.34%	140	11.52%
Nouns (e.g., possibility)	130	7.56%	65	5.35%
Others (e.g., if-clauses)	150	8.72%	95	7.82%
Total	1,720	100%	1,215	100%

Table 2 illustrates that there is a heavy reliance on modal auxiliaries, which account for over 36% of hedges for Filipino writers and nearly 42% for Thai writers. This preference often indicates a “safe” rhetorical strategy, using established grammatical markers to temper claims. However, the use of epistemic lexical verbs and adverbs shows a more sophisticated level of engagement with the data.

Below are excerpts categorized by the types found in the corpora:

1. Modal auxiliaries (The most frequent category)

Used to express degrees of possibility or to avoid making absolute generalizations.

Filipino (Corpus 14):

“These pedagogical shifts might lead to improved learner autonomy over a long-term period.”

Thai (Corpus 31):

“The lack of significant correlation would suggest that external variables were not fully controlled.”

2. Epistemic lexical verbs (Secondary preference)

These verbs (e.g., suggest, seem, indicate, tend) allow the writer to act as an interpreter of the data rather than a mere reporter.

Filipino (Corpus 5):

“The data appear to support the hypothesis that urban students have higher digital literacy.”

Thai (Corpus 12):

“The findings tend to show a preference for traditional learning methods among older participants.”

3. Epistemic adverbs and adjectives

These are used to fine-tune the degree of certainty regarding a specific finding.

Filipino (Corpus 19):

"It is likely that the intervention was successful due to the small sample size." (Adjective)

Thai (Corpus 8):

"The discrepancy in scores is presumably caused by the technical difficulties during the online test." (Adverb)

4. Nouns and "Others" (If-clauses/Approximators)

These are often used to address the limitations of the research or to provide conditional results.

Filipino (Corpus 22):

"There is a possibility that cultural bias influenced the survey responses." (Noun)

Thai (Corpus 40):

"If the duration of the study were extended, the behavioural changes might become more evident." (If-clause)

The dominance of modal auxiliaries (Filipino: 36.05%; Thai: 41.98%) reflects a universal strategy in academic writing where modals serve as the most accessible and versatile tool for adjusting the strength of a claim. This preference is supported by Wannaruk and Amnuai (2016), who found that even in local Thai journals, modal verbs remain the primary linguistic resource for researchers to express tentativeness in the R-D section.

However, the data also shows that Filipino writers utilize a slightly higher proportion of epistemic lexical verbs (24.13%) and epistemic adverbs (12.21%) compared to Thai writers. According to Aull and Lancaster (2014), the use of a wider variety of hedging markers—beyond simple modals—is a characteristic of advanced academic stance. This suggests that Filipino ELT writers, likely due to their ESL immersion, are more comfortable using lexical verbs such as "suggest", "appear", and "seem" to create a more sophisticated and less repetitive rhetorical style.

In contrast, the heavy reliance of Thai writers on modals (reaching nearly 42% of their total hedges) may point to what Chen and Zhang (2017) describe as a restricted repertoire of hedging devices among EFL learners. This intercultural difference highlights that while the function of hedging is understood by both groups, the linguistic range used to achieve it varies. Filipino writers demonstrate a multi-layered approach to hedging, whereas Thai writers tend to stick to conventional modal structures to avoid grammatical complexity while still fulfilling the requirement of academic modesty (Sermsook et al., 2017).

A qualitative look at the corpus reveals specific patterns. For instance, Thai writers frequently relied on “will” or “must”, which can occasionally come across as overly assertive. In contrast, Filipino writers preferred “could” or “suggests”, as seen in sample Filipino (Corpus 12): “The data suggests a potential correlation...” instead of “The data proves...” This difference implies that the ESL background of Filipino writers may foster a higher sensitivity to the nuanced layers of academic modesty.

These results suggest that while both groups recognize the disciplinary necessity of hedging, Filipino writers possess a more diverse linguistic toolkit that allows for a more nuanced negotiation of claims, whereas Thai writers may benefit from targeted pedagogical interventions focusing on lexical and adverbial hedging to enhance their rhetorical flexibility in international ELT discourse.

Table 3: Hedge functions in the R-D section

Functions	Filipino (%)	Thai (%)
Reliability Hedges (show confidence/validity)	39.50%	42.10%
Writer-oriented Hedges (shield the author)	34.20%	31.50%
Attribute Hedges (show estimate values)	24.10%	24.80%
Reader-oriented Hedges (facilitate communication)	2.20%	1.60%

Table 3 shows that in terms of function, reliability hedges were the most prevalent for both groups (Filipino: 39.50%; Thai: 42.10%), as writers in the ELT field attempt to increase the perceived validity of their claims while maintaining an appropriate degree of caution. This is followed by writer-oriented hedges, which are used to shield the author from the consequences of being proven wrong.

The high percentage of reliability hedges suggests that both Filipino and Thai ELT writers are primarily concerned with accuracy-oriented hedging. According to Salager-Meyer (1994, as cited in Magday et al., 2022), this function is essential in research to signal that the writer is providing the most plausible explanation for the data without overstating the results. The slightly higher reliance of Thai writers on this function (42.10%) may indicate a cautious approach to data interpretation, potentially owing to what Jaroongkhongdach et al. (2012) described as a tendency for Thai scholars to prioritize factual reporting over bold rhetorical negotiation.

On the other hand, Filipino writers showed a slightly higher use of writer-oriented hedges (34.20%) compared to Thai writers (31.50%). As noted by Aull and Lancaster (2014), advanced academic writers often use these hedges as a protective strategy to diminish their personal accountability for a claim. This suggests that Filipino ELT writers are more accustomed to the “hedging-as-protection” norm in international academic discourse, allowing them to present controversial findings while minimizing professional risk.

Reader-oriented hedges were the least used by both groups (Filipino: 2.20%; Thai: 1.60%). This mirrors the findings of Wannaruk and Amnuai (2016), who argued that ELT research articles—whether published in national or international journals—tend to follow a highly formal and impersonal style. The low frequency

of this function indicates that both Filipino and Thai writers prioritize objective distance rather than direct interaction or engagement with the reader, which remains a standard convention in Southeast Asian academic writing contexts (Uccelli et al., 2013).

These findings highlight a shared understanding of the scientific nature of ELT research, where the primary goal of hedging is to ensure the reliability of the claims made. However, the subtle differences in writer-oriented hedging suggest that Filipino writers may have a more strategic grasp of using language for “professional self-protection,” a skill that is vital for surviving the rigorous peer-review process of high-impact journals.

This underscores the need for ELT writing instruction to move beyond simple vocabulary-building and focus on the rhetorical positioning of the author—teaching scholars not just how to report data, but how to protect their academic persona strategically and navigate the power dynamics between the writer and the scholarly community.

5. Conclusion

This study confirms that the disciplinary practices of ELT as a soft science encourage the use of hedging regardless of cultural background. However, the higher frequency of hedges in the Filipino corpus suggests that language proficiency and educational context (ESL vs. EFL) play a role in how tentatively claims are presented. Filipino writers, with their higher immersion in English, demonstrate a more sophisticated rhetorical range, while Thai writers tend to rely on more direct and less varied hedging strategies. These findings highlight that while international ELT discourse shares universal norms, local linguistic backgrounds continue to shape the way scholars negotiate knowledge within their respective academic communities. This study acknowledges potential limitations, particularly regarding the rhetorical conventions of the specific journals sampled and the varying experience levels of the authors. Future research could investigate how these variables intersect with linguistic backgrounds.

6. Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study offer several critical implications for ELT and academic writing instruction in Southeast Asian contexts. First, the disparity in hedging frequency and variety suggests that ELT curricula should transition from a focus on purely formal grammatical accuracy toward pragmatic and rhetorical competence. While Thai writers are proficient in grammatical structures, their reliance on a restricted repertoire of hedges indicates a need for instructional materials that introduce a broader range of epistemic markers—specifically lexical verbs (e.g., suggest, indicate) and adverbs (e.g., presumably, potentially)—to help them move away from over-categorical and direct tones that may be perceived as unscientific in global discourse.

Second, for Filipino ESL writers, although their immersion in English provides a natural advantage in soft language, there is still a need for explicit instruction in authorial positioning. Instruction should focus on the strategic use of writer-

oriented hedges not just as a linguistic habit, but as a “protective” rhetorical tool to navigate the rigorous peer-review process of high-impact journals. Finally, the study underscores the value of data-driven learning (DDL). By using corpus-based feedback in the classroom, students can visualize the linguistic markers of stance used by expert writers. This allows them to see hedging not as a sign of weakness or uncertainty, but as a sophisticated method of engaging in scholarly dialogue. Ultimately, narrowing the pedagogical gap between local writing practices and international standards requires a curriculum that empowers scholars to negotiate their findings with both confidence and academic humility.

Conflict of Interest

The researchers declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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The researchers declare that AI tools were used for non-intellectual tasks. ProWritingAid and Grammarly aided in grammar refinement, while Gemini assisted in organizing the researchers’ ideas. All scholarly content, including data analysis and interpretations, was human generated. The AI tools served solely to enhance writing and organization, with no contribution to the core intellectual work.

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